

SMARTPHONES WITH STAYING POWER

> In the past few years, the smartphone has evolved to become *the* mobile business tool, one that allows you to email, text, manage social media and, of course, make calls using one powerful device. So a smartphone is a smartphone, right?

Not if you want to present flower photos at their crisp, color-corrected best or capture shop videos and events in high definition (HD) and then use powerful apps to edit, enhance and upload that rich media online.

When you start to explore those features, you quickly find that not all smartphones are created equal.

With these priorities for photo and video quality and usability in mind, we've compared the latest phones, reviewed carrier plans, and tested various photo and video apps and desktop software options to provide recommendations for the best smartphone setups for florists.

Bigger Is Better

First, I recommend purchasing a phone that runs on one of two platforms: Google's Android or Apple's iOS. BlackBerry and Windows devices currently lack market share, which means they have less robust app development behind them. Android and iOS are ubiquitous, with plenty of app choices, especially for photo and video production.

When you're taking shots or capturing video, a big screen helps you more easily view what you've captured and edit the media on the go. (Plus, bigger

screens are a godsend for older eyes.) The **iPhone 6 Plus** screen clocks in at 5.5 inches, with the **Galaxy S5** at 5.1 inches and the **Samsung Note 4** at 5.7 inches.

Because it's waterproof up to three feet, the **Galaxy S5 Active** is a solid choice for flower shops (splashing hoses and buckets, anyone?). With its powerful front and back cameras, the **HTC Desire Eye** is a good choice for shops that inject personality into their social media sites with selfies.

Carry Me Home (or Abroad)

Aside from the HTC, which is available only through AT&T, all of our smartphone picks run on the major national wireless carriers.

Verizon and AT&T have the most comprehensive coverage in the U.S. — even in rural areas. AT&T and T-Mobile offer an add-on international roam option, making them attractive for international travelers.

If you are a data hog who watches Netflix or Hulu or streams music, consider the unlimited data plans offered by T-Mobile and Sprint. Business plans through various carriers can be a good deal, too: Those let you share a pool of data and usually cost about \$150 a month plus an additional \$20 to \$30 per device if you finance the device over one or two years.

Snap-Happy Apps

The built-in camera software for iOS and Android is acceptable for day-to-day shots, but if you're serious about top-

quality photos, consider taking a photography class to learn the importance of exposure, aperture and shutter speed, among other aspects. Once you're versed in those details, invest in software that allows you to control these variables, such as **ProCamera 8** (iOS) and **Camera FV-5** (Android). To fix, crop or enhance photos, check out the free **VSCO Cam** (iOS, Android) or **Autodesk Pixlr** (iOS, Android). Adobe Photoshop loyalists might also like the familiar interface of the **Adobe Photoshop Touch app** (iOS, Android).



Moving Picture Apps

Control also is critical when capturing videos. **Filmic Pro** (iOS) and **Cinema FV-5** (Android) turn your smartphone into a broadcast-worthy video camera by allowing full control over focus, exposure, white balance and frame rates, and providing tools such as light and audio metering.

The apps even accommodate the use of an external microphone — highly recommended since the built-in mic is the weakest hardware component in all smartphones.

Managing Your Media

Once you amass photos and videos, how do you manage your growing library? For Mac and PC, check out Google's powerful, free **Picasa**. By default, it organizes media by date, but you'll want to tag every photo and video you import to access them later. (Think: wedding, bar/bat mitzvah or specific color schemes, etc.)

If you're on a Mac, try the free **iPhoto**. Rather than tags, iPhoto uses keywords and smart albums to categorize media. If you create a smart album that looks for the keyword "Marsala," anything you keyword in the future with "Marsala" will automatically appear in this folder.

Next month, we'll talk about creating workflows that you can easily replicate and share with your staff, so that everyone on your team is ready to capture, edit and upload media on the go. 📸

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TAKE CONTROL Video apps like Filmic Pro (shown; Cinema FV-5 is similar) puts elements such as exposure, audio and focus right on your mobile screen, so you can control them, resulting in more consistent lighting and sound quality than you'd get with the default video software.